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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1591
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1606
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1083

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 000779

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MTS, IO/RHS, DRL/MLGA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/05/2018

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [MY](#)

SUBJECT: UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIRD COMMITTEE 2008 HUMAN
RIGHTS PRIORITIES: MALAYSIA

REF: SECSTATE 93981

Classified By: POLITICAL CHIEF MARK CLARK
REASON 1.4 (B AND D).

¶1. (C) In a September 4 meeting with MFA official Nur Ayuni Zainal Abidin, Poloff outlined U.S. priorities for the UNGA Third Committee, including the human rights situations in Iran, Burma, and DPRK, and possible initiatives on Zimbabwe. Poloff also urged that the GOM refrain from supporting no-action motions and re-examine the tendency of G-77 and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) members to vote on resolutions based on bloc positions. He outlined U.S. concern regarding "defamation of religions" resolutions.

¶2. (C) While not wishing to discuss the GOM's positions on the possible country-specific measures, Nur Ayuni noted that Foreign Minister Rais Yatim was "strident" in insisting that the GOM should only support "results-oriented" resolutions. FM Rais emphasized "constructive engagement" with the countries in question and advocated a gradualist approach, not focusing on single issues. Nur Ayuni said Malaysia was following such principles as a member of the Human Rights Council. She noted that FM Rais was the current chairman of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), which plans to address the Zimbabwe situation in its September 27 meeting in New York. Nur Ayuni said Malaysia would follow the above-mentioned principles, arguing for a "gradual" steps with realistic prospects for successful implementation.

¶3. (C) Nur Ayuni would not comment specifically regarding the GOM's position on possible "defamation of religions" resolutions, only suggesting that her government placed more emphasis on "recognition of socio-cultural differences" than "freedom of expression" concepts. (Note: A GOM-sponsored conference on Islam and the West, held in June, featured participants' endorsement of international legal restrictions against "defamation of religions." End Note.) She recalled that in their recent meeting, FM Rais and U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Sada Cumber had agreed on the critical importance of fostering mutual understanding through inter-faith dialogues and pledged to work together on such initiatives.

¶4. (C) Comment: The GOM historically has voted against U.S. positions on the great majority of such Third Committee issues and Nur Ayuni's responses provided no indication that this is about to change.

KEITH